



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management



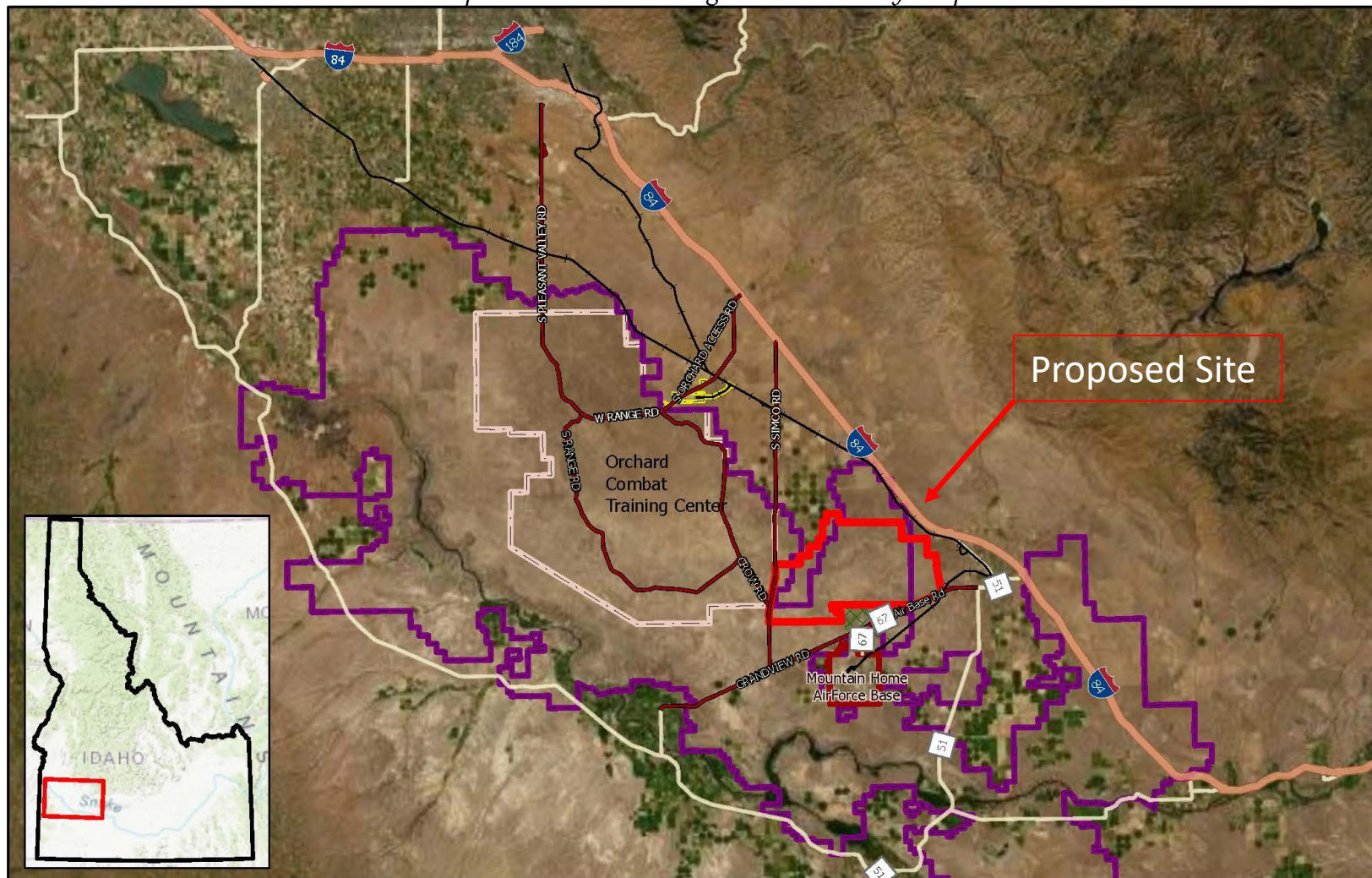
Simco Training Area EA

Elmore County, Idaho





Proposed Simco Training Area - Vicinity Map



UTM Zone 11 North Meters
North American Datum 1983/WGS84
GIS Systems, Environmental Management Office
IDARNG
October 2020

Scale: 1:500,000





National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Environmental Assessment (EA)

Estimated Completion Date: 30 August 2021



Presentation Goals and Objectives

Goal 1

- Inform the public on:
 - the proposed action
 - the issues resulting from the proposed action
 - the affected area and resources
 - the decision process



Presentation Goals and Objectives

Goal 2

- Solicit comments from the public to assist with the NEPA review process. Comments received in response to this solicitation will be used to:
 - identify potential environmental issues related to the proposed action
 - identify additional alternatives to the proposed action that meet the IDARNG's and BLM's purpose and need.



Presentation Outline

- BLM/IDL Missions
- History and Background (*NCA)
- Project Introduction
- OCTC (Issues)
- Simco Training Area – Purpose and Need
- Resources Identified for Analysis
- Environmental Assessment Process
- Comment Process and Contacts
- Questions?



BLM and IDL Missions

BLM:

The mission of the BLM is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Established in 1993 with the enactment of Public Law (P.L.) 103-64, and managed by the BLM, the NCA was established to provide for the conservation, protection, and enhancement of raptor populations and habitats, as well as the natural and environmental resources and values associated the area, including the scientific, cultural, and educational resources and values of the public lands within the NCA.

IDL:

The mission of the IDL is to manage Idaho's endowment assets to maximize long-term financial returns to public schools and other trust beneficiaries, and to provide professional assistance to the citizens of Idaho to use, protect and sustain their natural resources.



Military Mission and Background

The mission of the IDARNG and the OCTC is to provide training lands and Annual Training facilities first to the Idaho National Guard (IDNG) and Reserve Forces, and then to other government and civilian organizations when possible.

The state missions include providing assistance as requested to the Governor during State emergencies, including natural disasters, civil disturbance, or terrorist attacks. During times of national emergencies, the President reserves the right to mobilize the National Guard, putting them in federal duty status. A list of OCTC-specific missions is listed below:

- Providing a training area for National Guard (NG), Reserve, and Active Military Forces
- Providing assistance, facilities, and training areas for logistical support to units conducting Inactive Duty Training (IDT) and Annual Training (AT)
- Providing small arms and crew-served weapons qualification ranges and facilities
- Providing maneuver areas suitable for training heavy armor and mechanized units
- Providing range facilities for M1A1 and M1A2 tank series and Bradley fighting vehicles
- Providing for artillery gunnery and maneuver
- Providing for AH-64 Apache attack helicopter gunnery
- Providing or coordinating organizational and direct support maintenance facilities for units conducting training
- Providing training areas and facilities to local law enforcement agencies, civil defense organizations,
- Reserve Officers Training Corps departments, public education institutions, and other civilian activities are also conducted on the OCTC, as long as no interference occurs with existing military training activities.



History of the NCA and IMD

1953 – The Army Corp of Engineers gave permission to the Idaho Military Division (IMD) to use public lands in what is now the NCA for military training purposes.

1958/1959 – *The Department of Interior granted an indefinite Special Land Use Permit to the IMD to use public lands in what is now the NCA for military training purposes.*

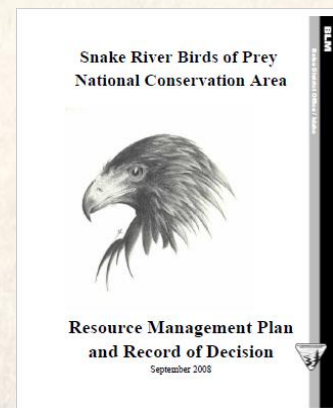
1971 – Approximate 26,000 acres of public land along the Snake River Canyon were withdrawn by Public Land Order (PLO) 5133 as the Snake River Birds or Prey Natural Area (BPNA).

1979 - The Governor of Idaho, on behalf of the IMD, and the BLM State Director entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to authorize continued National Guard (NG) training activities on public lands. The latest MOU was signed in 2020.

1980 – The Secretary of Interior withdrew approximately 482,640 acres by PLO 5777 as the Snake River Birds of Prey Area (BOPA).

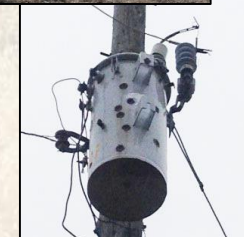
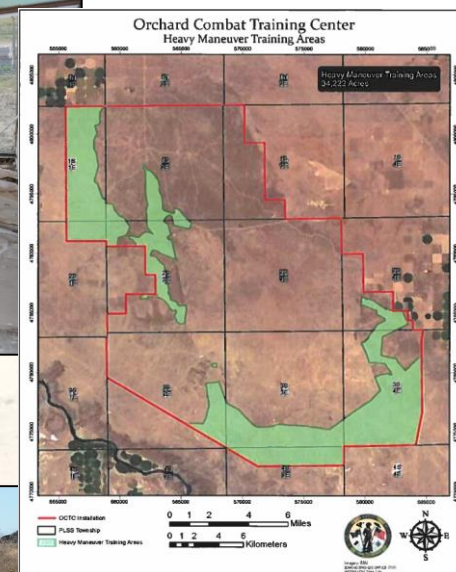
1993 – *Congress established the National Conservation Area (NCA) by Public Law 103-64, stating that military training activities could continue to the extent they are consistent with the intent of the legislation.*

2008 – *The BLM State Director signed a Record of Decision for the Snake River Birds of Prey NCA Resource Management Plan (RMP). This provided for continued military training activities within the NCA, but restricted heavy maneuver training activities on lands in excess of 10% shrub cover.*



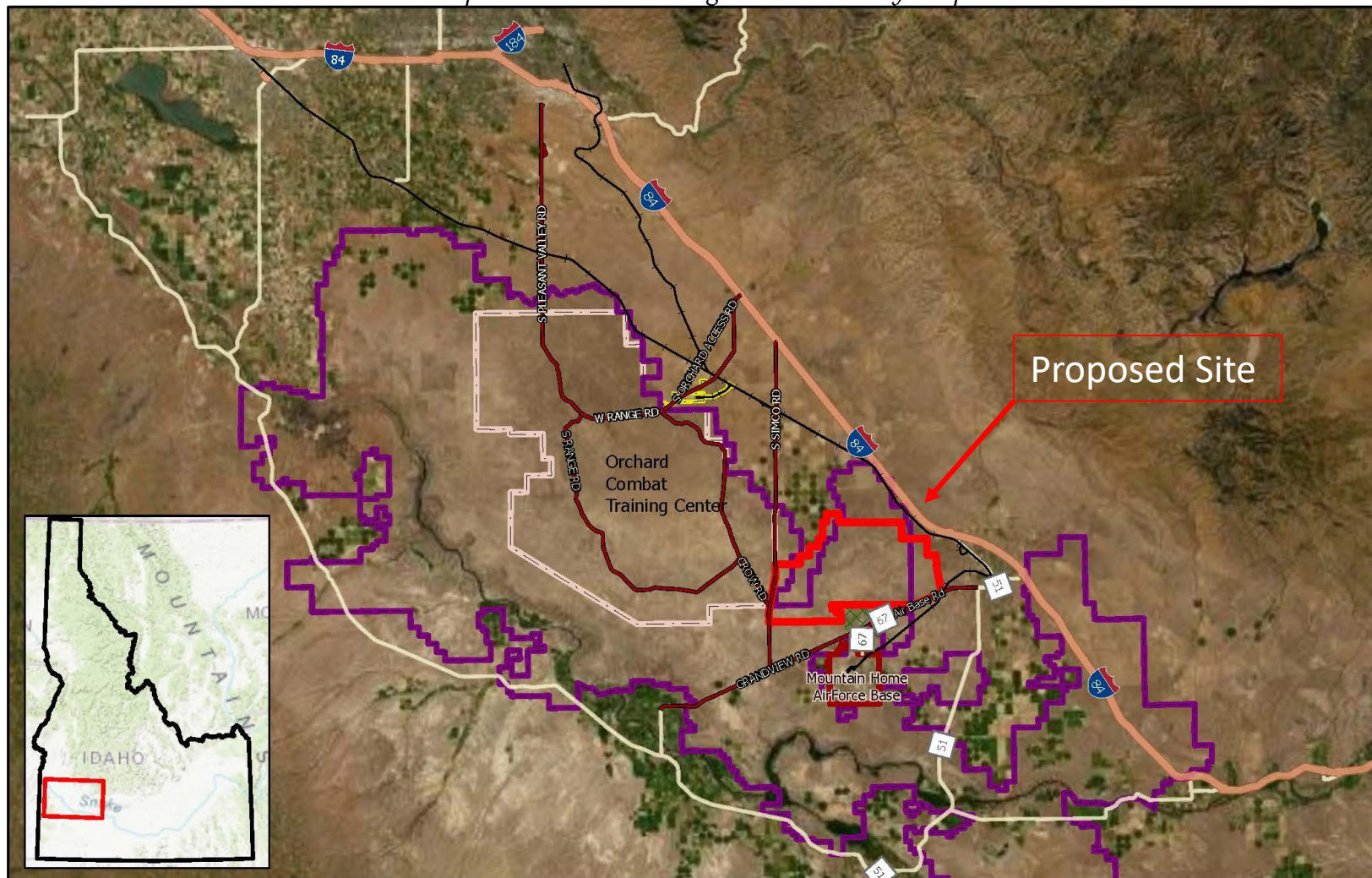
Orchard Combat Training Area – Issues

- Limitations and restrictions on the amount of available, heavy maneuver training lands within the OCTC (60% reduction associated with RMP 10% rule).
- Maneuver training conflicts associated with increasing trends in the amount of public access on lands within the OCTC (Shooting and Dumping).
- Safety hazards for soldiers associated with increased public shooting in the OCTC.
- Increased destruction of IDARNG equipment by public users.
- Continued changes in mission requirements for the IDARNG to meet Department of the Army (DA) needs.





Proposed Simco Training Area - Vicinity Map



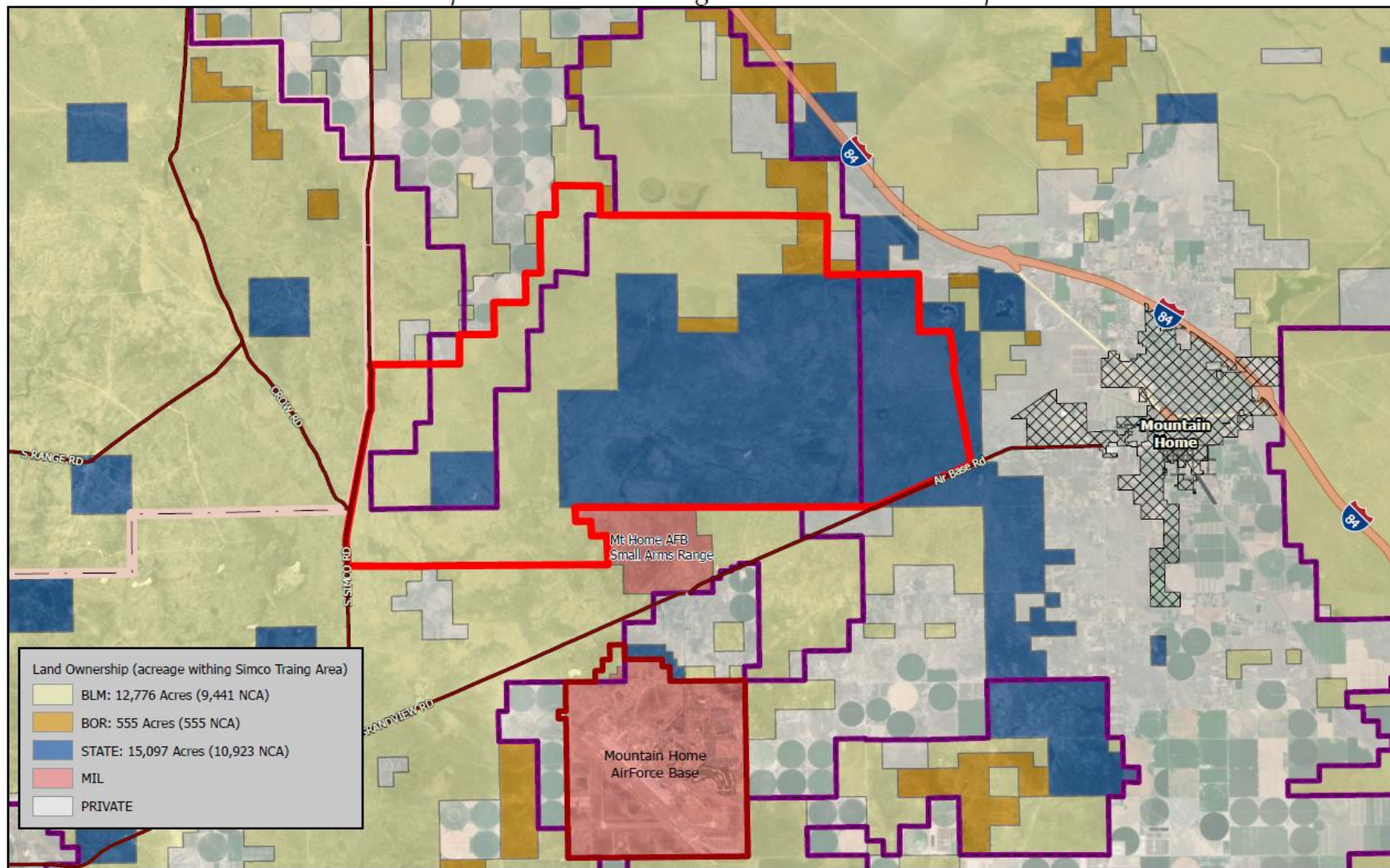
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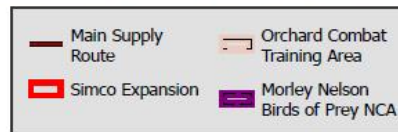




Proposed Simco Training Area - Land Ownership



Scale 1:140,000





Simco Training Area – IDARNG Purpose and Need

Purpose:

Make available a sufficient amount of accessible, heavy maneuver training lands to support the mission of the IDARNG and Department of Defense in a sustainable manner.

Need:

To meet current DoD training requirements outlined in Field Manual (FM) 3-96 and Training Circular (TC) 25-1 and to prepare for and ensure troop combat readiness and safety.



Simco Training Area – Needed to:

- Offset the loss of available maneuver training lands within the existing OCTC boundary.
- Address increasing training conflicts associated with the growing public use of the OCTC.
- Allow Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) to complete an exportable combat training capability (xCTC) within 30 days to better prepare for Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) and achieve Mission Essential Task List (METL) proficiency.
- Department of Defense Instruction Number 1215.06 prevents Guard brigades from keeping Soldiers on orders for more than 30 days during Annual Training, thereby reducing Guard BCTs from achieving METL proficiency.
- National Guard Regulation 350-1 encourages all elements of a unit to train together whenever possible. Current land holdings in the OCTC do not allow for a BCT to complete xCTC and other mandated collective training within 30 days.
- Provide the capability for LSCO and training over realistic distances all of which contribute to the overall strategic readiness of the force.
- Support sustainable range practices by resting and rotating areas impacted by military training activities, i.e. allowing vegetative regeneration and recovery in areas impacted.



Simco Training Area – BLM Purpose and Need

- Purpose

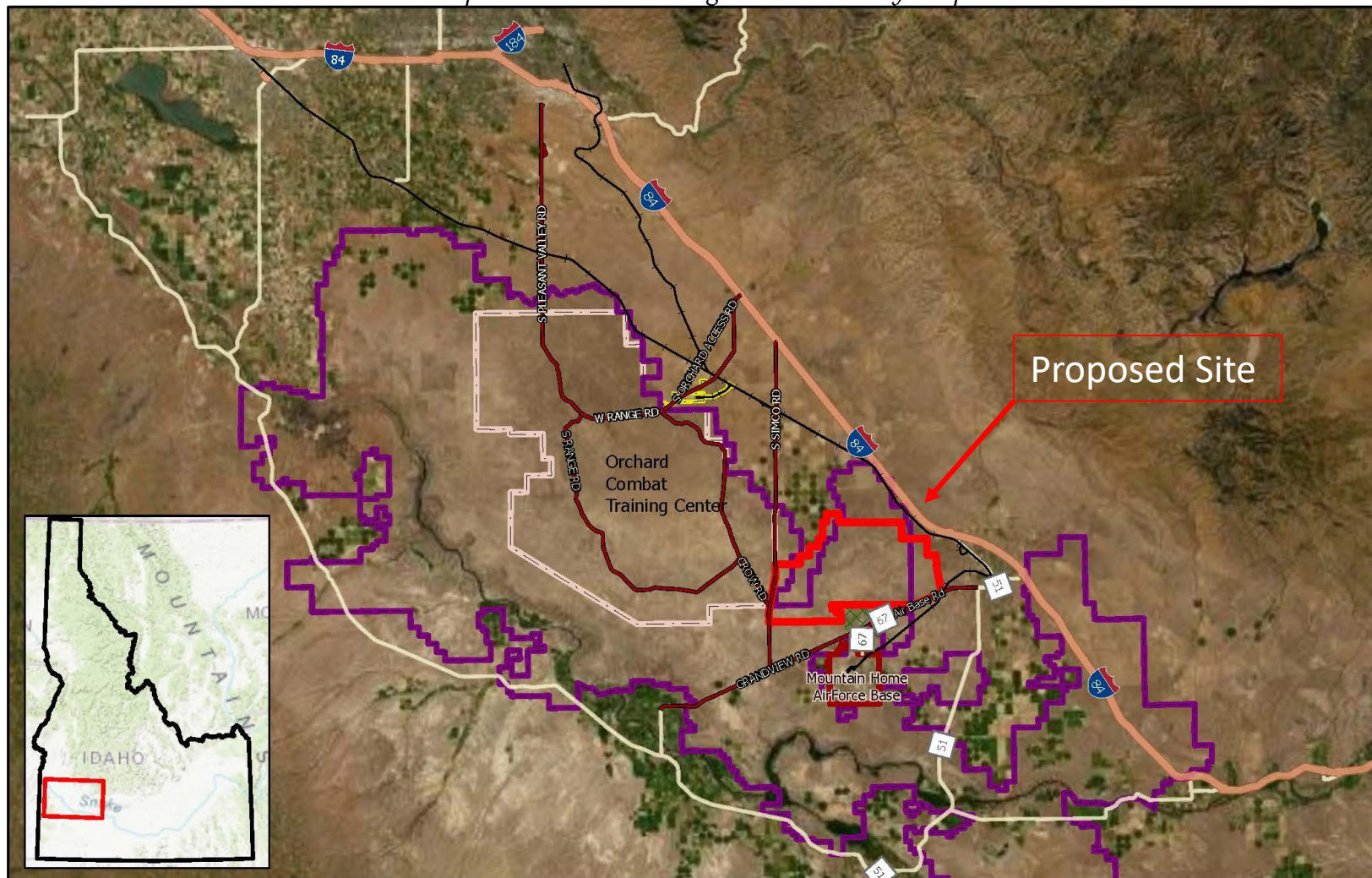
The purpose of the action is to decide whether to grant ROW authorizations on 12,846-acres of BLM and 563-acres of BOR managed lands to the IDARNG for maneuver training activities, and to construct, use, and maintain 12.7-miles of unpaved roadway and other infrastructure projects associated with the proposed Simco Training Area.

- Need

The need for the action is for BLM to respond to IDARNG applications for use of Federally managed public lands pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), 43 United State Code (U.S.C.) § 1701 et seq. and the BLM's ROW regulations, 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 2800.



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Proposed Military Training Activities:

Timeframe – Available: March to November
Primary: May to September

Maneuver Training Only No Live Fire Operations

- Force on Force, Night Training, Attack/Defensive Positions, Use of Blanks and Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES)

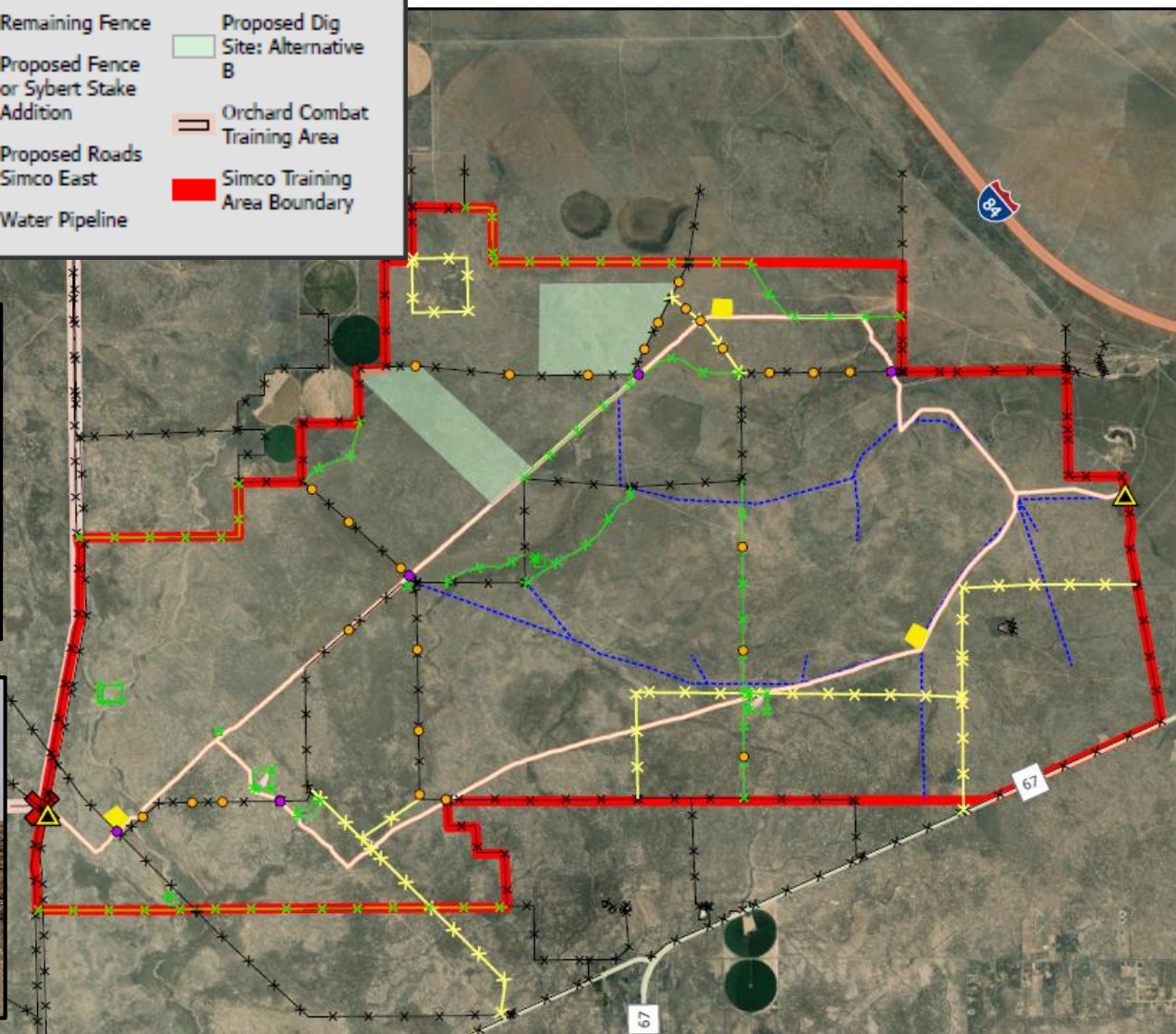
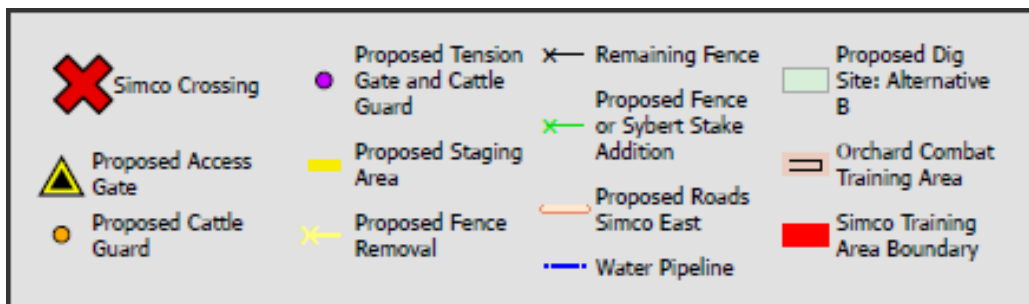
Level of Use - Not to exceed eight (8) mechanized or armored companies (125 tracked vehicles) with opposition and support units annually

Assembly Areas (3): 20 acres each.

Mission Support Programs - Wildland Fire Assets, ITAM, INRMP, ICRMP, Active Monitoring and Restoration (Increased Funding and Resources available for BLM and State Lands).



Simco Training Area – Proposed Infrastructure





Identified Resources/Uses to be Analyzed

An internal review process conducted by a interdisciplinary technical team identified the following resource/use issues, which could have a measurable material bearing on the decision process.

An issue statement and indicators were also developed for resource-specific analysis in the EA.

- **Land Use (Livestock Grazing, Recreation/Access, and Military Training)**
- **Air Quality (GHG-CC, Fugitive Dust)**
- **Noise**
- **Soils**
- **Biological Resources: (Invasive, Nonnative Species, Wildland Fire, Wildlife – Terrestrial, and Threatened or Endangered Species)**
- **Cultural Resources**
- **Social and Economic**
- **Public Health and Human Safety**
- **Environmental Justice**
- **Transportation and Infrastructure**
- **Hazardous and Toxic Materials and Waste (HTMW)**



Land Uses – Livestock Grazing, Recreation/ Access, and Military Training Activities

Issue Statements

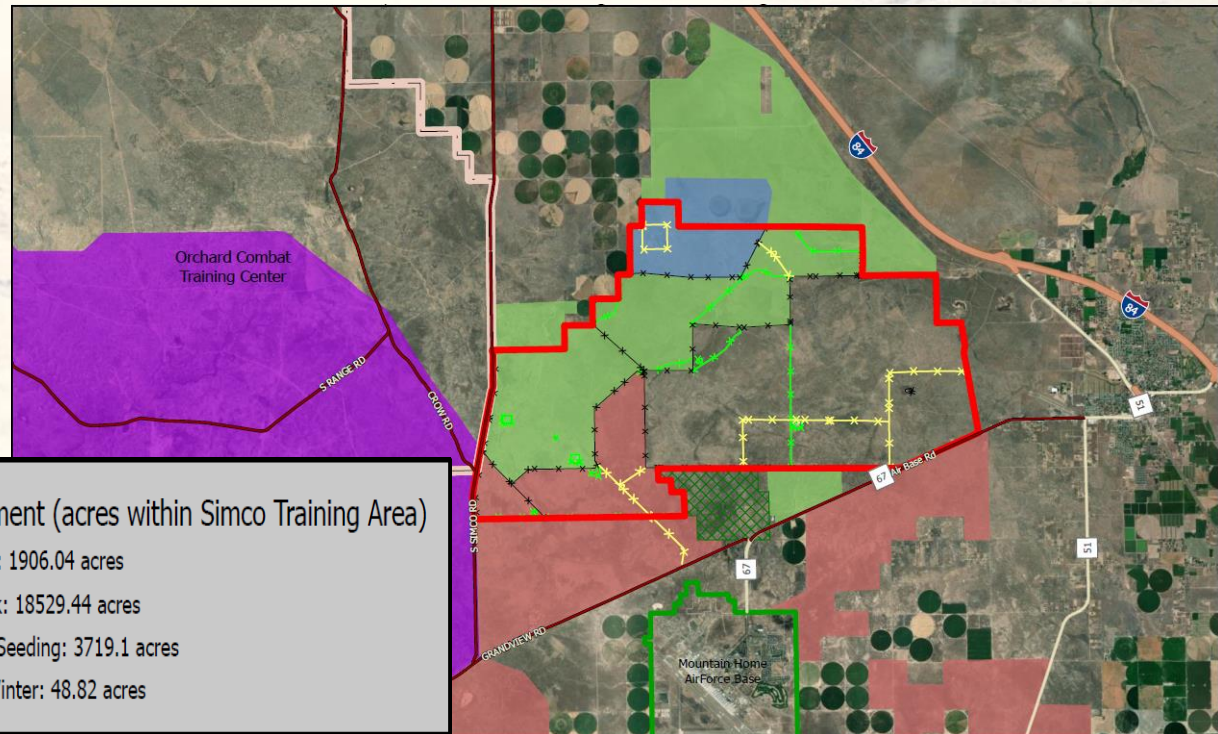
- Livestock Grazing: How would surface disturbance from maneuver training and engineering activities impact available forage?
- Recreation and Access: How would restrictions and road management impact public access?
- Military Training: How would the proposed action affect the IDARNG's ability to meet military training requirements?



**MILITARY
TRAINING IN
PROGRESS**

Grazing Allotment (acres within Simco Training Area)

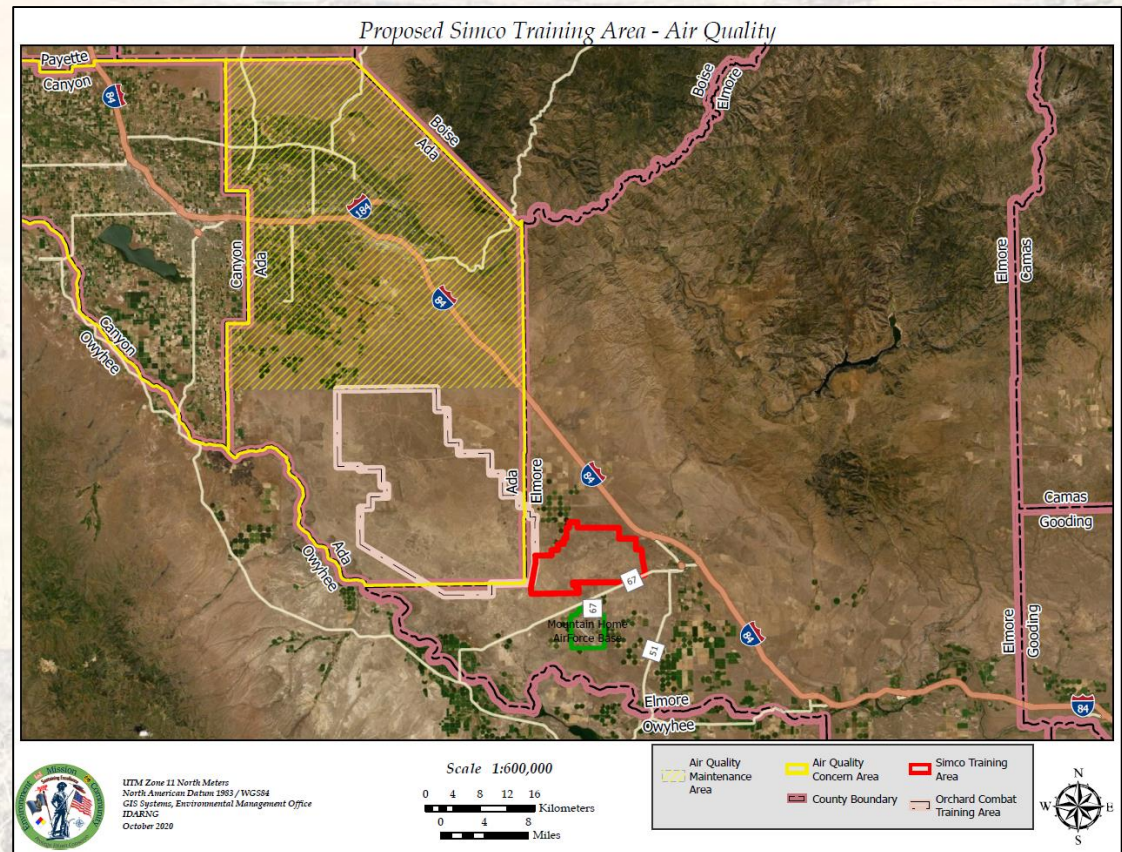
- Crater Rings: 1906.04 acres
- Squaw Creek: 18529.44 acres
- Rattlesnake Seeding: 3719.1 acres
- Sunnyside Winter: 48.82 acres



Air Quality

Issue Statements

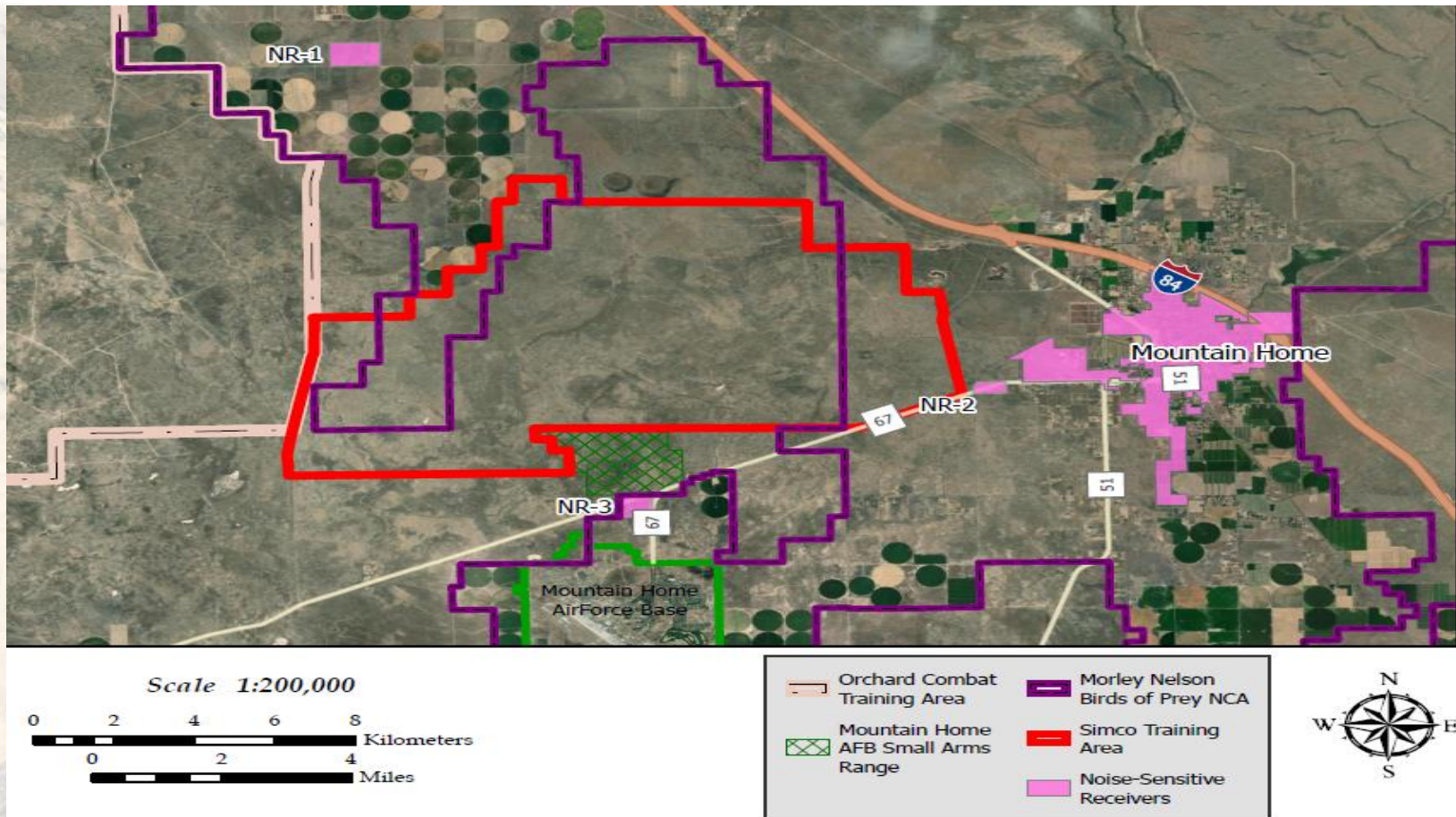
- GHG-CC and Fugitive Dust: How would military training activities in the project area affect air quality relative to DEQ standards?



Noise

Issue Statement

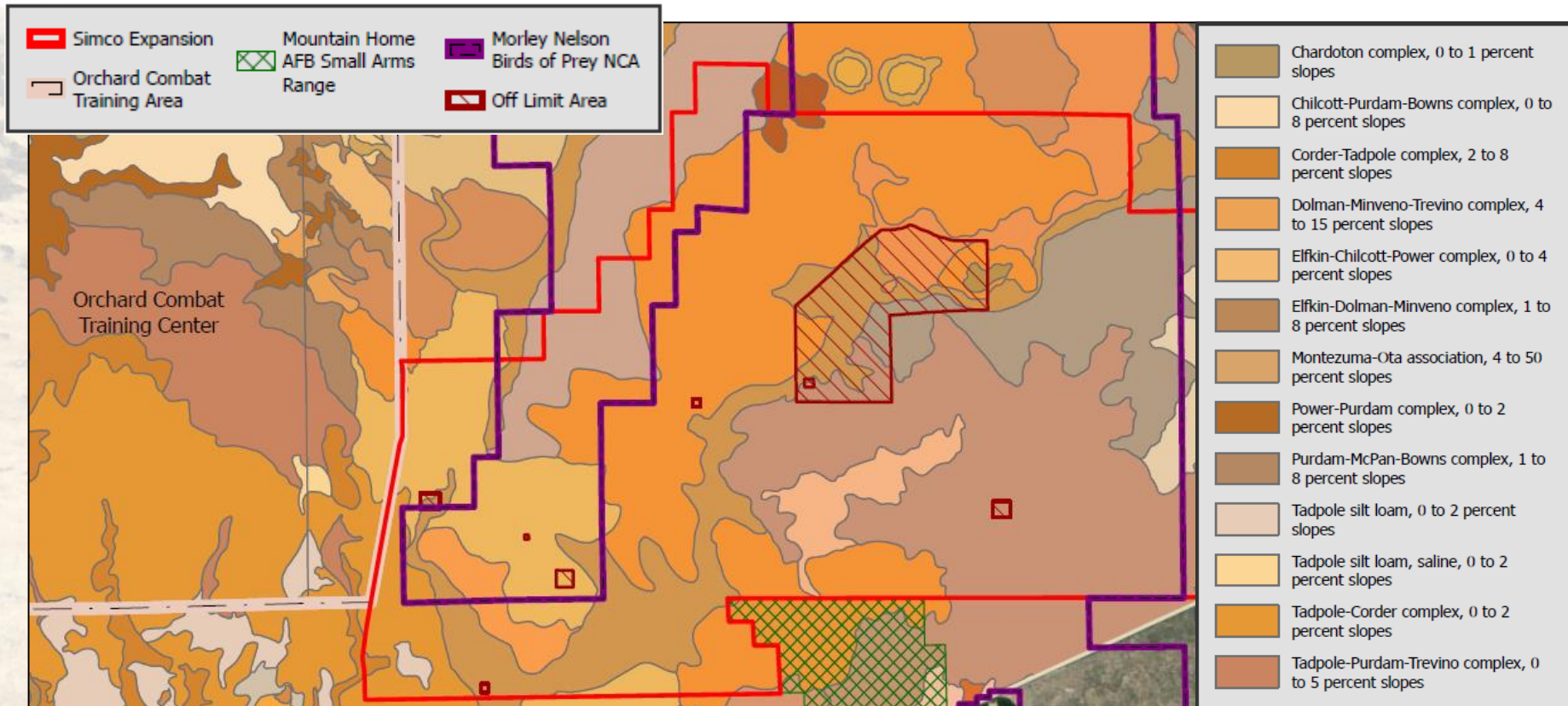
- How would military training activities in the project area affect ambient noise?



Soils

Issue Statement

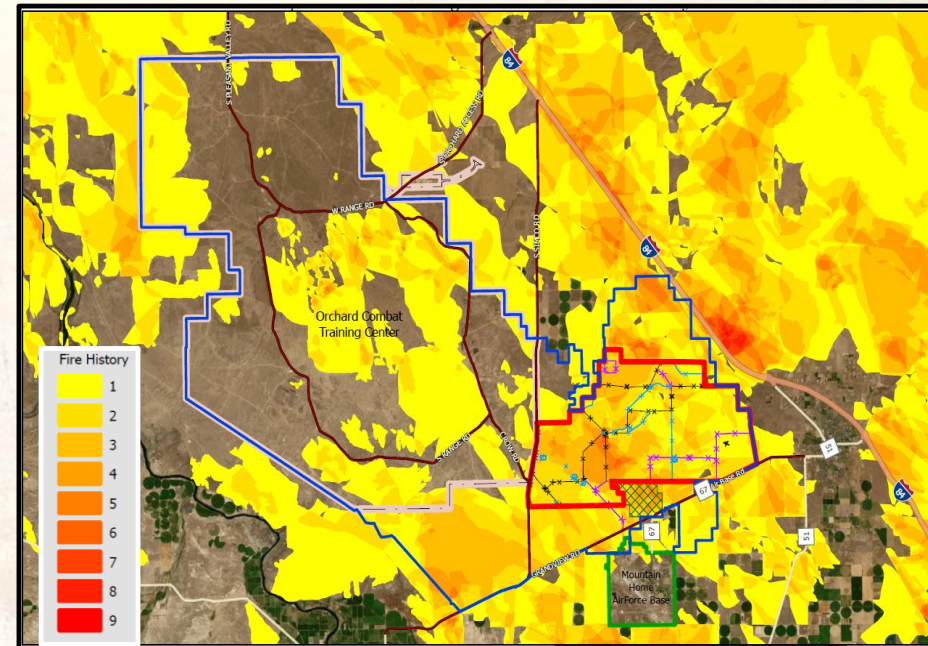
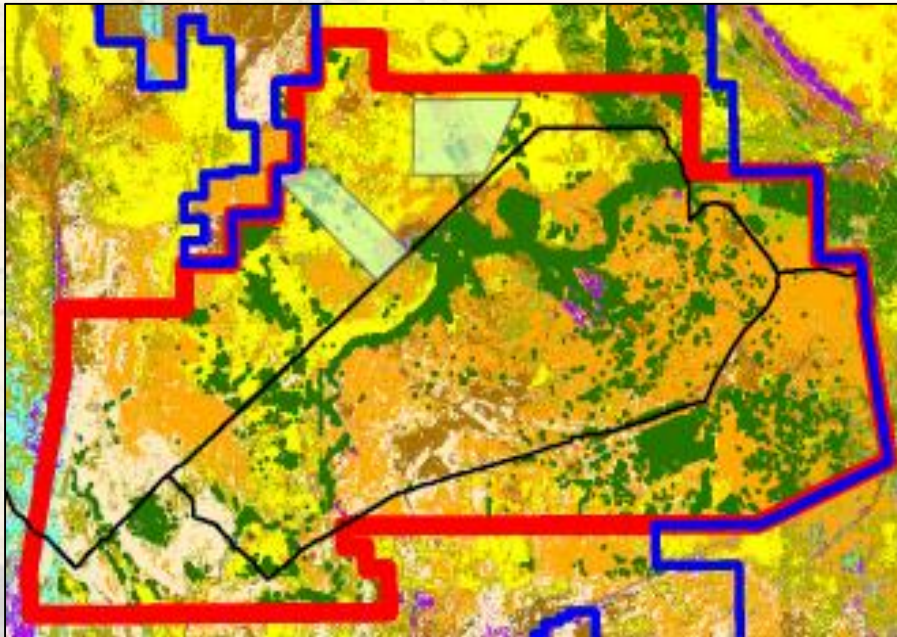
- How would surface disturbance associated with training affect soil erosion?



Biological Resources – Vegetation and Wildfire

Issue Statement

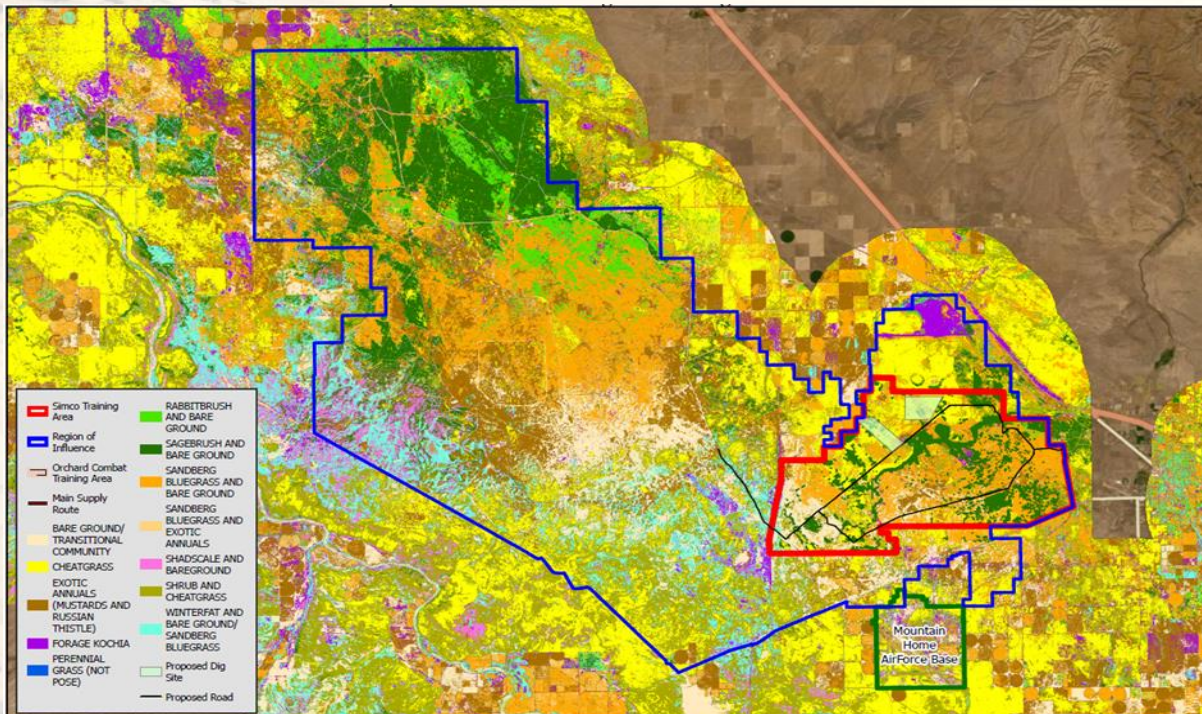
- Vegetation (Invasive and Nonnative Species): How would ground disturbance affect the risk of occurrence of invasive species?
- Wildland Fire: How would infrastructure changes from the proposed action affect wildland fire risk?



Biological Resources

Issue Statement

- Wildlife: How would surface disturbance from military training and infrastructure affect the quality of raptor prey habitat?
- Wildlife: How would human presence related to training activities and construction affect breeding/nesting habitat for migratory birds and raptors?



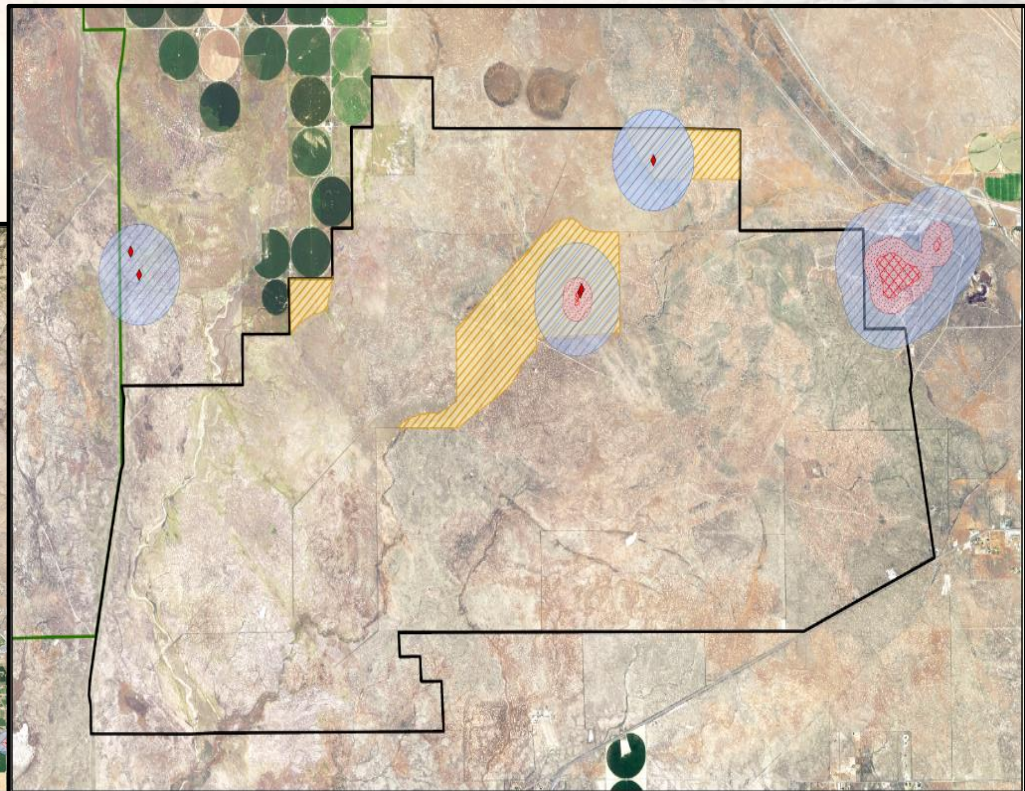
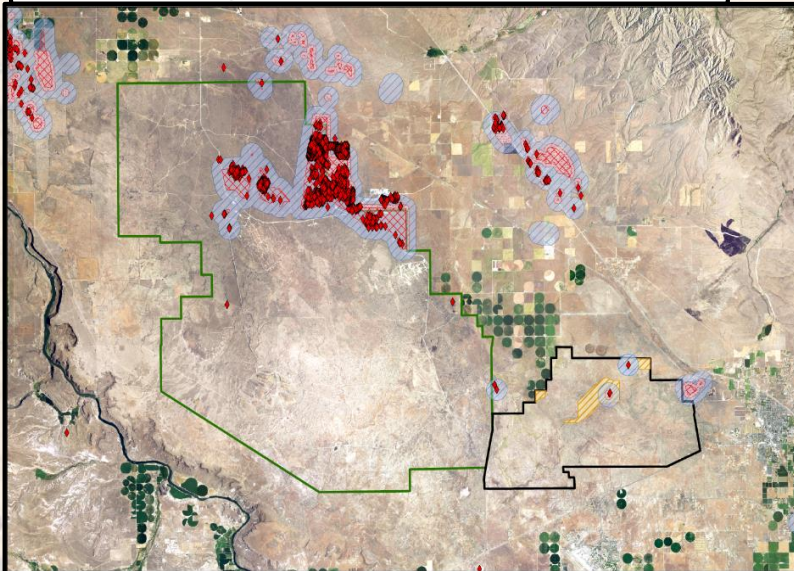
Biological Resources – Threatened or Endangered Species

Issue Statement

- Threatened or Endangered Species: How would surface disturbing activities impact slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium pappilliferum*) populations and associated habitat?

Legend

- ◆ Slickspot peppergrass Observation
- ⊠ Slickspot peppergrass Element Occurrence
- ▨ Slickspot peppergrass Proposed Critical Habitat
- ▤ Slickspot peppergrass Habitat Integrity Zone
- Existing Fence
- ▨ Off-limits Areas (Slickspot peppergrass and shrub protection)
- ▭ Proposed Simco Training Area Boundary
- ▭ OCTC Boundary





Cultural Resources

Issue Statement

- How would the proposed action affect sites eligible for the National Historic Register?

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The APE lies within the traditional territory of the Shoshone Bannock, Shoshone Paiute, Burns Paiute, Fort McDermitt Paiute, and The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs

All five tribes resided in the area for thousands of years, where they procured food resources and conducted religious ceremonies.

The region was used in the historic period by fur trappers, emigrants on the Oregon Trail, gold miners, ranchers and homesteaders. The most common type of historic cultural resources within or near the APE include cattle and sheep camps, homesteads, stone monuments, ditches, and depressions

METHODS

- A Class I inventory evaluation was done using information from multiple Section 106 and 110 surveys conducted by the IDNG, as well as information collected from SHPO record searches
- A Class III survey was conducted over the APE to identify any cultural resources
- Surveys were done through the use of 6-10 archaeologist spaced at 30 meter transects using recording techniques that meet Secretary of the Interior's Standards



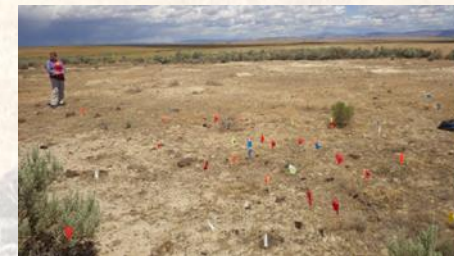
RESULTS

- The Class I inventory recorded a number of resources representing both prehistoric and historic use of the area
- The Class III survey revealed 22 newly recorded archaeological sites
- Sites included lithic scatters, historic dumps, and rock cairns
- Two sites consisting of lithic and pottery scatters were deemed eligible under the National Registry of Historic Places (NRHP)
- There were no structures eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)



RECOMMENDATIONS

- The proposed project will have no effect on cultural properties that are recommended as eligible for listing to the NRHP
- All eligible sites will have a 50-meter buffer
- All sites within the APE should continue to be periodically monitored





Social and Economic

Issue Statements

Economics

- How would construction and military training affect local and regional social and economic factors?

Public Health and Human Safety

- How would military training activities affect public health and safety?

Total Economic Impact to Idaho (Direct, Indirect, Induced)*

- 8th Largest Employer in the State (7,298 employees)
- \$186 Million in Annual Labor Income (Federal Funds)
- \$189 Million in Annual Operation, Maintenance, and Construction (Federal Funds)
- Total Economic Output: \$375 Million (Annually)*
- \$11.83 Million to State Tax Taxes

Proposed Action

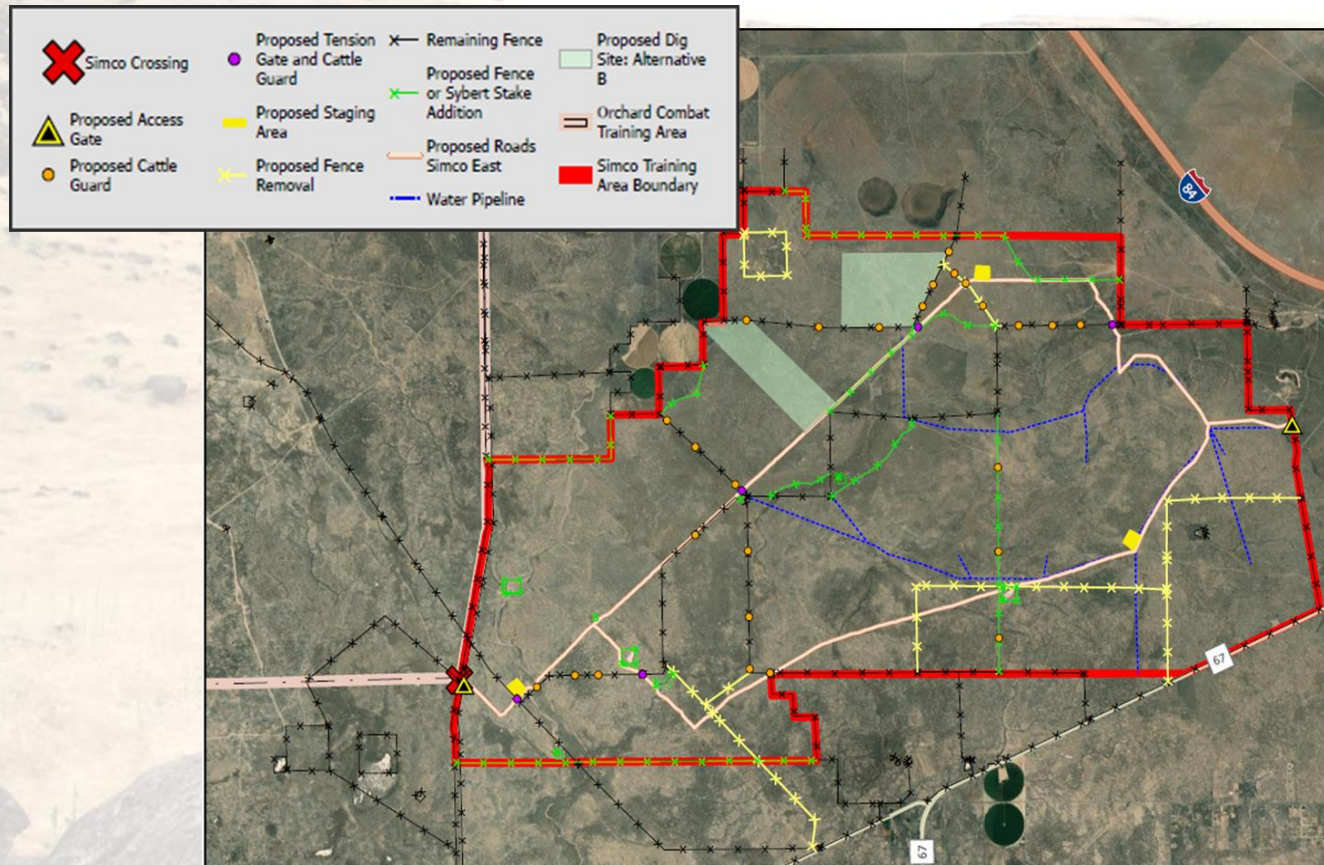
- IDL Lease – \$1.3 million dollars over 20 years to State Endowment
- Infrastructure improvements – Approximately \$9.2 Million

*Note: The economic assessment was developed by Dr. Dick Gardner in 2017. The report only looked at local ID Army Guard contributions from Gowen and OCTC.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Issue Statement

- How would transportation be affected by improvements to infrastructure?





Regulated Waste

Issue Statement

- How would construction and training affect the amount or presence of regulated waste?



Toxics Release Inventory

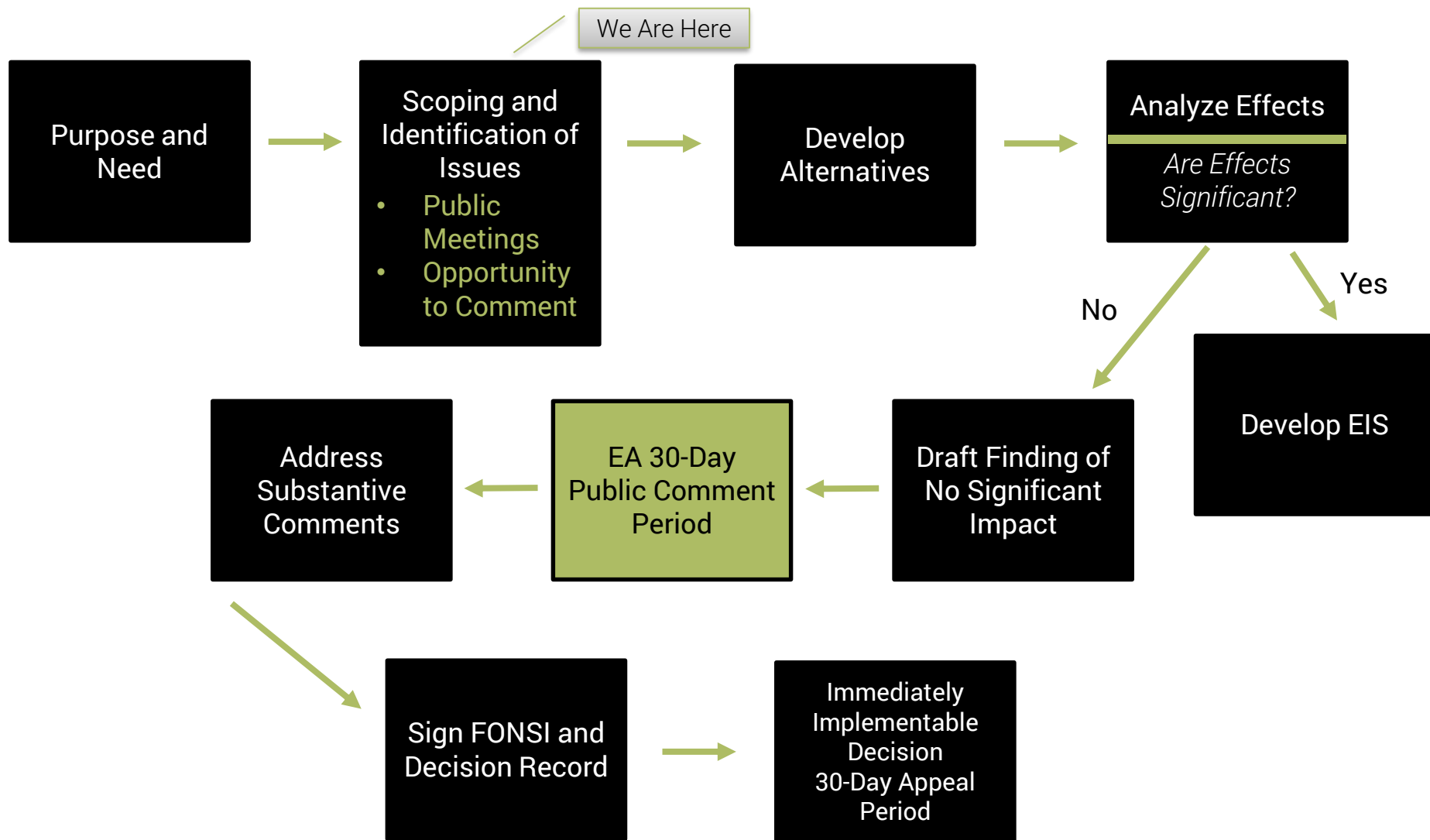
Facility Summary - Reporting Year 2019

Facility Information

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD ORCHARD COMBAT TRAINING CENTER RANGES
4715 S BYRD ST
BOISE, ID 83785
Industry Sector(s): Other
Date of Last Inspection: 6/12/2012



Environmental Assessment Process





Public Input Needed

Public scoping for the proposed action began on **March 5, 2021**. Comments made on this proposal would be most helpful if they are received by **April 5, 2021**, and are directly relevant to the proposal and project area. It is anticipated that a preliminary EA will be made available for public comment sometime in **June of 2021**. Public scoping comments sent electronically should be sent to **ng.id.idarng.list.ngid-emo@mail.mil** or **blm_id_fourriversoffice@blm.gov** with the title of this project in the subject line. Information about the project can also be found at the IDARNG website **<https://emomil.imd.idaho.gov/>** (Documents for Review), or the BLM website **<https://go.usa.gov/xsbJZ>**.

Any individuals, groups, or organizations wishing to comment on this process should attend the public scoping meetings or submit written comments to:

Idaho Army National Guard
Environmental Management Office
Attention: Charles Baun
4715 South Byrd Street, Bldg. 518
Boise, Idaho 83705-8095

Bureau of Land Management
Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National
Conservation Area
Attention: Charlotte Alexander
3948 Development Ave.
Boise, ID 83705

Electronic comments should be sent to **ng.id.idarng.list.ngid-emo@mail.mil** or **blm_id_fourriversoffice@blm.gov** by close of business on **April 5, 2021**.



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A photograph of a rugged landscape with large, moss-covered rocks in the foreground and middle ground. Sparse, low-lying vegetation is scattered across the terrain. In the background, a dark, stormy sky with heavy clouds looms over the horizon. The word "Questions?" is superimposed in large white text over the center of the image.

Questions?